

*Measure would protect coastal habitats of endangered species*

WASHINGTON—Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) introduced a bill demanding stronger consideration of environmental impact and protection while drilling for oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The Protecting our Oceans Act amends current policy to clarify that the protection of ocean ecosystems is of primary importance and also limits drilling in areas that are home to endangered species.

**“The unfathomable disaster in the Gulf Coast illuminates the need for a national energy policy, and exemplifies the belief that the cost of carbon is too large for our nation to bear,”** said Quigley. **“From the Gulf to the Great Lakes, we have a moral obligation to leave our planet inhabitable for future generations, and it begins with taking the necessary precautions against potentially catastrophic and irrevocable harm to our natural resources and precious ecosystems.”**

The Protecting our Oceans Act changes the OCS policy to put environmental considerations and consequences first. The bill makes clear that exploration and development of the OCS will be authorized in limited areas of the ocean, and only when scientific research shows that activities can proceed with minimal risk to the health of ocean ecosystems.

Further, Quigley’s bill amends the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to take into account distinct areas and environments within the OCS. It calls for specific precautions for OCS exploration in ecosystems that provide habitats for endangered species, include a high diversity of marine and aquatic life, and areas that play critical roles in species’ feeding and migratory patterns.

The OCS consists of the submerged seabed between the coast and deep ocean. Exploration and extraction policy is beyond the jurisdiction of individual states and administered by the Department of the Interior.

A life-long member of the Sierra Club, [Quigley has spent his career fighting for conservation](#) and environmentally responsible policies. Since his election to Congress, Quigley has

[voted for legislation to limit greenhouse gases and create green jobs](#)

(ACES—H.R. 2998) and

[supported a bill to increase fuel economy standards](#)

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[introduced a resolution commending the United States Army for its green initiatives](#)

, a measure to make urban areas safer for birds, and an amendment in the defense acquisition

IMPROVES Act—H.R. 5013—

[calling on new military purchases to be more energy efficient](#)

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